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ABSTRACT

During the period April-May 1997 at Hillsborough Community College (HCC) in Florida, three study teams conducted studies of the utilization of library resources by format, subject areas, and year of publication. The study investigated book and audiovisual circulation; journal use; and interlibrary loan and intra campus delivery. This paper discusses the findings of these studies, and presents recommendations and new procedures adopted by the study task force. Two recent user surveys have shown that there is a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by the HCC Library and Learning Resource Center. When examined by year of publication, the utilization studies show that older materials in the collections are heavily used. Data by year of publication and subject demonstrate that the HCC collections have a high proportion of materials with publication dates of more than 20 years old. Results of the studies indicate a need to increase the number and quality of current materials available for HCC students and faculty. The studies form a baseline and should be used to design further studies which will probe more specifically into user needs. With the changes that technological advances and the availability of electronic resources are bringing to information provision, greater awareness and cooperation with other libraries in the state are becoming a necessity. (SWC)

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Collection Assessment Report for Hillsborough Community College

By:

Anna H. Perrault

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COLLECTION ASSESSMENT REPORT
for
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by
Anna H. Perrault, Ph.D.

Background

In 1996, Hillsborough Community College received a report from the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities on the Self-Study conducted in 1995[1]. A report was also received of a program review for Libraries/LRC's by consultant W. Lee Hisle which was commissioned by the Florida State Board of Community Colleges.[2] In order to follow-up on recommendations made in these two reports, the administration of the Hillsborough Community College L/LRC's decided to conduct a collection assessment project and retained Dr. Anna H. Perrault as a consultant for the project.

Methodology

Beginning March 3, 1997, the consultant met four times with a task force of staff representing all the campus libraries. At the first meeting, the SACS report on the HCC libraries was discussed. It was decided the assessment would be designed around the recommendation in the 1996 SACs report, that the HCC campus L/LRC's "assess the adequacy of access to resources."

Definitions were agreed upon for the key terms "adequacy," "access," and "resources." The definitions are expressed in operational terms as assessment measures:

Adequacy-- multiple measures to assess by--
- Utilization
- Currency
- Satisfaction of users
- Subject areas
- Suitability to curriculum

Access--
- What is available locally and statewide including delivery through the HCC intra campus system and Interlibrary Loan through OCLC
- Timeliness of delivery

Resources--
- Print, AV, Journals, Electronic information sources

Existing data were reviewed to determine which data sets might be relevant to the

collection assessment. These data include the Hisle Program Review and a CCLA sponsored LINCC Collection Assessment conducted in 1996.[3] Results of an evaluation of services which was in process at the four HCC campus L/LRC's would also be available.

There were no existing data on the utilization of resources by format, subject areas, and year of publication. It was decided that HCC staff would gather data for the utilization of resources by format, subject areas, and year of publication. Three study teams were set up to conduct studies of

1) Book/AV circulation
2) Journal use
3) ILL and intra campus delivery

The studies were conducted April 4-May 2, 1997. This time period was the only remaining opportunity to gather data before the end of the spring semester. Since external circulation was to be counted through returned materials, April would be a heavy month for return of materials checked out during the semester. Although April would not be the heaviest month of use, it would be sufficiently representative to be used as a sampling period.

It was agreed from the outset that the study procedures would be outlined and tested in April 1997. If the procedures were effective, the studies would be repeated in two sampling periods in the fall and spring of the 1997/98 academic year to obtain data for one academic year.

The findings of the three study teams are reviewed in this report. Complete data tables are in the appendices. In reviewing the data and discussing the results of the studies, a number of recommendations and new procedures were adopted by the task force. The analysis and interpretation of the data from the team studies are organized according to the categories established by the task force in defining the statement, "adequacy of access to resources." In addition, findings from the Hisle Program Review and the evaluation of services conducted in the spring 1997 by HCC staff are also analyzed. The report concludes with summary interpretations and recommendations.

Utilization of Materials

Circulation Study Team

The Circulation Study Team gathered data on the use of monographic and AV materials. (Results in Appendix A) **NOTE: appendices not included with the ERIC report.**. Data were separately gathered by both formats for external circulation and in-house use. Data elements were year of publication and call letters for each item counted. All circulation data were analyzed by thirty-one Library of Congress call number breakdowns. Data tables in the report are composite for all campuses. Data were also made available for each campus.

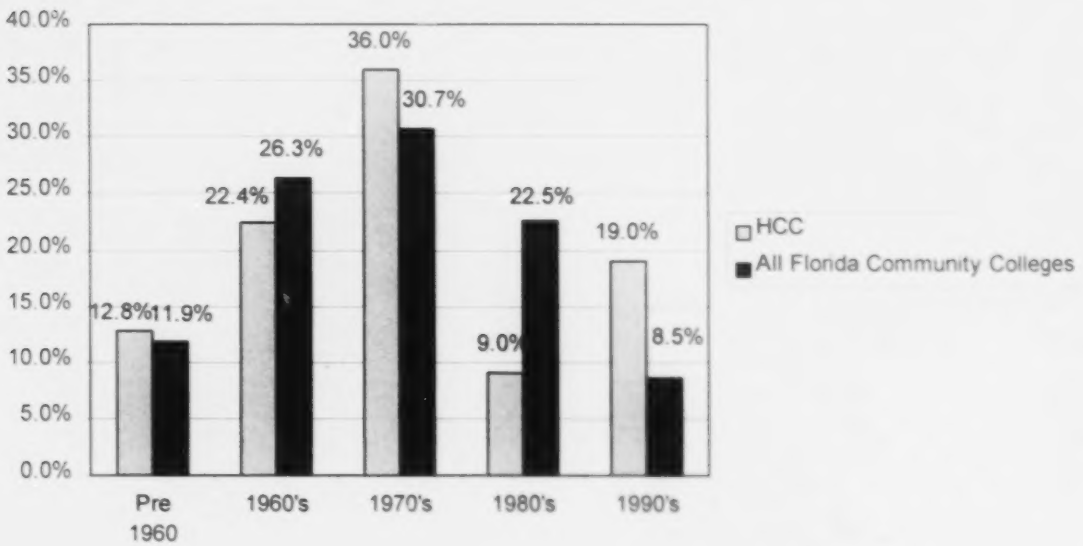
The total number of titles in the collection by decade is derived from data in the Columbia Library System which was the online catalog system at HCC prior to the statewide LINCC database. Staff at HCC ceased maintaining the data in the CLS system in 1996. Data on distribution of titles by subject by decade are not currently available from CCLA for the LINCC

database. The CLS system data do not include titles added to the collections in 1996 and 1997. A weeding project was conducted prior to the cataloging records being loaded into the LINCC system. In 1989/90, 5,303 volumes were withdrawn from the collections and again in 1995/96 another 5,166 volumes (3,163 titles) were withdrawn. The records for these materials were left in the CLS system. Although the CLS system data are not up-to-date, it was agreed that the subject totals by decade from the CLS system would be sufficient to use in estimating circulation of monograph titles as a percent of the total collection by subject.

A. External circulation of monographs

Summary totals for both external circulation and in-house use are shown in Table I below. More detailed data on number of titles circulated as a percentage of the number of titles by publication decade by thirty-one Library of Congress subject categories are in Tables 1-4 in Appendix A.

Summary Table I - Titles Held by Decade



For external circulation, a total of 2,864 items were counted. Of these, 786 or 27.4% were from the 1970's. The 1980's had 26.7% and the 1990's had 24% of monographic titles circulated in the four week period. Circulation of materials published in the 1970's and 1980's is higher, both in absolute numbers and proportionately, than circulation of more current 1990's materials. In discussing the results with the task force, several reasons were advanced for this circulation pattern.

- For some subjects, such as literature and math, the classics are heavily used for

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assignments and the date of publication of a text is not important.

- Students do not know the value of current materials for certain topics and will use whatever they can find on a topic.
- For many subjects, there are no current publications suitable for the lower division undergraduate instruction or student's academic level. The librarians stressed that the students need introductory treatments and many academic books are too specialized and advanced for the community college level.
- Faculty seem to be stressing the use of the journal literature in assignments; thus, when students look for current materials they use the CD-ROMS with full-text articles.
- Books may be used for different types of assignments than those using current journal literature.

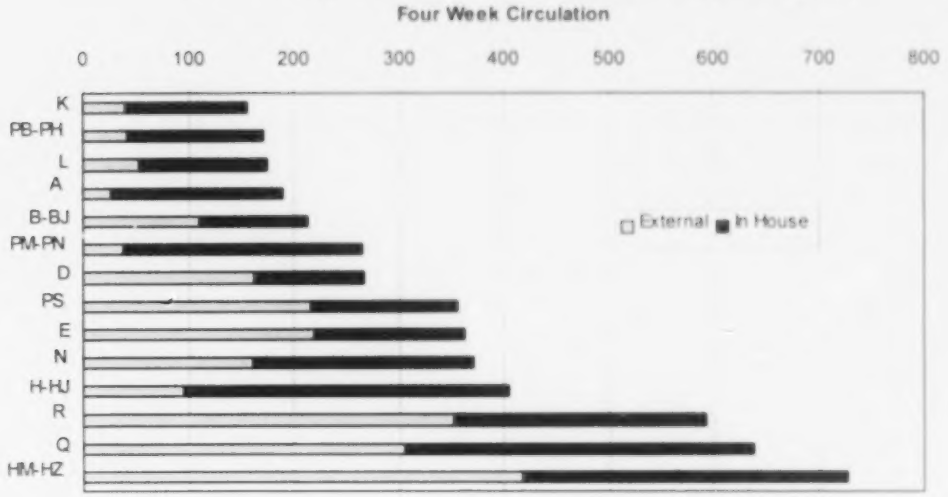
With regard to the high use of books from the 1970's and 1980's, the library staff indicated that extensive weeding had been done at the older campuses prior to the switch from the CLS to LINCC. Classic older materials which were still being used were left in the collection. Only outdated materials which were not being used or were inaccurate were removed. Thus, the staff think the heavy circulation in older materials is not detrimental, although it does reflect inadequate budgets in the 1980's and 1990's, resulting in a high proportion of the collection having older publication dates.

Table II summarizes use data by subject area. Both external circulation and in-house use are displayed on the bar graph. For external circulation, the highest circulation was in the HM-HZ's, sociology. Both the basic and life sciences in the Q's and the health sciences in the R's have the next highest circulation totals. Business (H-HJ), United States history (E), fine arts (N), and American literature (PS) also show considerable circulation. It must be borne in mind that these studies only represent four weeks of circulation activity. Over an academic year there might be greater variety in the number of titles circulated according to the classes being offered. From the results of the four week sample, circulation by subject seems to closely track course offerings. Results of a study over a full academic year would provide a more complete picture, but would probably not vary significantly from the results of the four week sample.

Recommendations: The external circulation study should be conducted for two sample periods in the fall and spring of 1997.

Results of the study should be analyzed for correlation of circulation with curriculum and instructional assignments.

Summary Table II - Circulation by Subject



B. In-house use of monographs

A separate study was conducted at each campus for in-house use of classified monographic materials (not AV). The totals for in-house circulation were higher than external circulation. Use of reference materials was counted, but number of reserve uses were not counted. There was some variation between campuses in exactly what was counted as one looked for mis-shelved books and out of order periodicals, whereas others just counted items left on tables. Unlike the external circulation which had the highest number in 1970 and 1980 imprints, the in-house uses were highest in the 1990's (Table I). This reflects the heavy use of reference materials, which would be kept up-to-date and used for current information.

The counts in two classifications in which many reference materials are classified, the A's and the Z's, are much higher for the in-house circulation than external circulation (Table II). Other classifications with high in-house totals are K (law), H-HJ (business),HM-HZ (sociology), PN (literary collections), PS (American literature), Q (basic sciences), and R (health sciences). The in-house totals demonstrate heavy use of the reference collections (and correspondingly the services) and other materials which do not circulate externally.

The difficulties of tracking in-house use were discussed. The results of the study can be regarded as at least average use, but actual use may be higher. LINCC does have provisions for tracking in-house use separately from external circulation. There was a discussion that the physical configurations of some of the libraries made recording in-house use possible while at others the data gathering would be very difficult. The results of the in-house study suggest that in-house use should be an established category for utilization of resources as it may account for

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over 50% of utilization of monographic resources. It was decided that the HCC statistics reporting form would be revised to insert a column to report in-house use statistics.

Recommendations: The in-house use studies should be repeated in the fall and spring of 1997.

Each campus should devise procedures for counting in-house use, including reference and reserves, through LINCC.

C. AV use

The third study measuring use of monographic materials was for AV. The majority of AV materials are not classified by subject. While it was known that the number of uses for AV materials would not be large, the small totals for the four weeks did not prove sufficient for meaningful analysis. According to staff, use of AV materials is heavily intra campus. The consensus of the task force was that faculty still want AV materials and would use them and make assignments from them, but that the faculty have given up on requesting AV materials because the collections had not been supported. The health sciences in particular make extensive instructional use of AV and now increasingly software programs.

Recommendations: Consideration should be given to upgrading and up-dating AV collections with the funding for monographs in 1998.

Selection should be focused on software programs, as well as AV materials, to supplement instruction.

Journal Study Team

The Journal Study Team was responsible for the design and conduct of in-house journal use. Periodical issues are not bound and do not circulate externally. Thus, the journal use study was conducted for the most part through manually counting issues left to be re-shelved. A complete list of the periodicals titles in the study is included in Appendix B. This list shows which campuses own each title and the number of uses recorded for each title by campus. The results of the in-house journal use study show that only a few titles received heavy use during the sampling period. While this short study is not definitive, it served to point out the need for a more rigorous study of periodical use at all of the HCC campuses.

In reviewing the data on use by title, it can be seen that a number of titles with high use for the study period are in subject areas which were also high use in the monograph circulation studies. Art in America and Art News correspond to the moderately high circulation in the N's for monographs. A direct relationship with the curriculum was high use in the health sciences and nursing. Titles with the highest use figures were for the most part popular magazine titles. African-American periodicals have high use as well as a number of news and business titles.

The staff were surprised at the high circulation for popular magazines and newspapers.

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But they realized that many of the basic academic titles have full-text in one of the electronic indexes, thus most likely reducing the use of the printed issues for those titles. A few staff pointed out that in some disciplines faculty who formerly made library assignments or professional journal assignments no longer do so. It is not known if the use of popular and current awareness materials are for personal use, or by students who attempt to make a universe of materials already familiar to them bend to fit academic assignments. One encouraging aspect of the high use of popular materials is that it may be an indication that HCC students use the L/LRC's collections and facilities regularly, and not just on occasion for mandatory assignments.

In addition to the in-house data gathering, the team attempted to obtain use counts through software in the Information Access Company product, Academic Index. After phone calls to IAC and attempting to get the statistics software supplied with the product to work, it was learned that the statistics software has been non-functional for several years and will not be operational until the Windows version becomes available.. Thus, there are no use statistics for one of the most heavily used periodical and full-text resources at all four campuses.

In addition to the local on-site Academic Index on CD-Rom, the UMI periodicals index is available statewide through LINCC. Statistics on use of the UMI indexes were requested from CCLA. The only data available for use of the UMI periodicals indexing is the number of times the database is accessed by HCC terminals on a monthly basis. A copy of the report is in Appendix B. The count of number of times the UMI database was accessed through LINCC for the month of April 1997 is 3,295, which is higher than the count for in-house use of periodicals. This count cannot be added to the total of periodical uses in Table IV. It is not known how the UMI use statistics translate into use of printed materials or full-text articles printed out from the database. Since the UMI product is an indexing tool with full-text articles, the use would be a mixture of searching for article citations and printing out the full-text of articles available in the database.

These UMI access counts do at least give base counts for the use of the electronic indexing database. For the academic year 1996/97, use was highest in February with October having the second highest number of accesses. March was third and April fourth in total use. The report did help to confirm that April was at least an average month for use statistics and lends credence to the data which were gathered by the study teams during April.

Recommendations: HCC staff should continue to work with CCLA and IAC to obtain more precise use data for the full-text periodical databases.

Until such data are available, HCC staff should gather data locally during two sample periods a year.

Interlibrary Loan and Intra campus Delivery Study Team

Only the Brandon campus had ILL and intra campus delivery records for the complete 1996/97 academic year. It was decided that the staff at the Brandon campus would provide a pilot study utilizing already existing data. A copy of this study report is in appendix C. After the

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report was reviewed, it was decided that the procedures devised by the ILL study team would be used by all campuses to study ILL activity in the 1997/98 academic year. The focus of these studies should be to identify concentrations of requests in areas of instruction and curricula emphases.

Recommendation: Interlibrary loan and intra campus delivery transactions should be tracked by subject area to identify curriculum needs not served by local collections.

Summary of use studies

Summary Table III — Total Circulation

	In House Use	External circ.	Total
Monographs	3,022	2,886	5,908
Journals	2,823		2,823
Audiovisual	48	105	153
Total	5,893	2,991	8,884

As can be seen in Table III above, each of the three studies of the major formats and types of circulation have totals which are very close in absolute numbers. Total external circulation of monographs was 2,886 with in-house use of monographs higher at 3,022. In-house use of periodical issues was 2,823. With the small number of AV uses added in, the total for all circulations and uses recorded in the study period is 8,884. This figure is for one month and represents the minimum uses which could be identified.

When the use statistics are compared with enrollment figures, utilization of resources can be characterized as high. The 1996/97 enrollment figures are 8,610 FTE on a headcount of 36,659. This means there are potentially 36,659 individual users. It must be borne in mind that many courses at community colleges are vocational or practical rather than reading/research intensive academic courses. The uses documented for one month are slightly over one use per FTE equivalent or 24% of the headcount. It is not known, of course, how many individual students are represented by the 8,884 uses counted in one month. But extrapolated to nine months of use, there would be 79,956 uses per 9 month academic year. This contrasts with the 29,000 in the SACS report which only counts external circulation. The difference in the two figures points up the importance of in-house use. These data indicate that the collections and services of the HCC L/LRC's are heavily used.

Data from the Florida Community College Assessment performed in 1996 show that HCC has a lower than average title to student ratio among the Florida Community College

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L/LRC's. [4] A chart plotting the title to student ratios for all Florida Community College L/LRC's is in Appendix D. Those L/LRC's above the line have a higher than average title to student ratio and those below the line a lower than average ratio. While there are variables which affect the title to student ratio, such as the degree to which curricula are academically or vocationally oriented or the age of the community college, the ratio is one measure of the relative size and strength of the L/LRC's ability to meet user's information needs. The fact that Hillsborough CC has a lower than average title to student ratio is a reason to question the adequacy of resources at the HCC L/LRC's.

All of these use statistics are for printed materials with the exception of the small AV totals. What of electronic resources? Does not the acceleration of the availability of information in electronic formats decrease the need for print materials? At this point in time, it does not appear likely that electronic publication will reduce the need for printed resources in certain categories of use. Electronic resources have rapidly replaced current awareness, indexing, and directory information tools in print. The full-texts of articles are increasingly being included along with the indexing services. In July 1997, the FirstSearch database of electronic indexing and abstracting services with over 60 full-text journals was made available throughout Florida in all libraries in state higher education institutions and also in public libraries. This statewide database will be accompanied in the future by a 1-800 number Helpdesk. The statewide FirstSearch service funded directly by the Florida legislature is now providing a base level of service for all students of higher education in the state of Florida. The database will duplicate and overlap with locally mounted electronic indexing services and journal subscriptions. With this base level of service available without cost to local institutions, these resources will affect the local collection development decision-making process.

It appears that electronic sources are getting heavy use at HCC judging from the UMI database access counts which were the only figures available on electronic use. With the advent of FirstSearch on a statewide basis, the need for additional CD-ROM indexing tools and the mix between electronic full-text and in-house print journal issues should be studied.

Recommendation: HCC staff should plan to study the impact of the statewide FirstSearch and Helpline on the utilization of HCC collections.

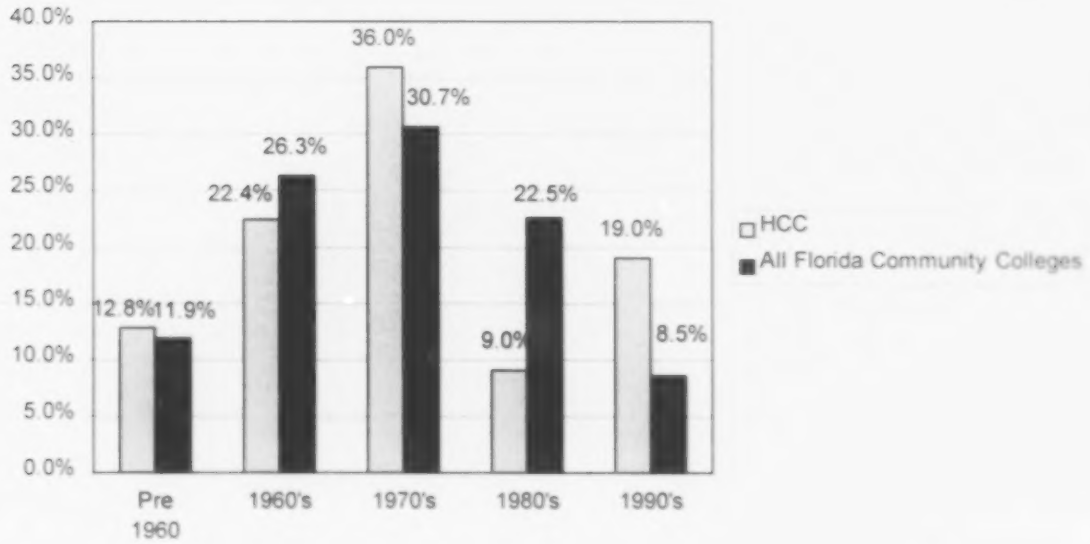
Currency of Materials

With regard to monographic non-reference works, it appears that new lengthy texts will continue to be predominantly printed format. These are the materials which have traditionally made up the "circulation" figures of libraries. Thus it is still appropriate to be discussing the rate of monographic acquisitions, the utilization of those materials, and the percentages of monographic materials by decade as they comprise the total collections.

The distribution of monographic materials by publication year for both HCC and the Florida community colleges is shown in Table IV below. HCC holdings for the 1990's are for six years or approximately 60% of the decade. According to LINCC statistics for HCC, the number of monographic titles in the collections published in the 1990's is 17,731 which represents 19%

of the total monographic collection. Projecting a static rate of growth through the end of the decade, 15,632 more titles would be added for a total of 33,363 by the end of the decade. This number would result in the percentage share for the 1990's of the total monographic collection being 30.8% of 108,276 titles. Assuming no mass withdrawal of materials, corresponding adjustments for the other decades would result in 8% for the 1980's, 30.8% for the 1970's, 19 for the 1960's, and 11% for pre-1960 imprints. Thus, the same rate of acquisitions for the remainder of the decade would change the overall distribution by decade so that the 1970's and the 1990's would have the same proportion of total. Following this scenario, by the year 2000, the HCC monograph collection would still be predominantly composed of materials more than 20 years old.

Summary Table IV - Titles Held by Decade



This distribution of imprints by decade differs from that of the LINCC database which is an aggregate of the holdings of the 29 Florida community college L/LRC's. The pattern for the LINCC database has the 1970's with the highest percentage of titles, the 1980's with a smaller percentage and the 1990's with a still smaller percentage.[5] For HCC L/LRC's, the 1970's do contain over one-third of the collection. The 1980's show the effects of poor funding. The 1990's at least display an increase in number of titles over the 1980's.

The present budgetary situation at HCC has 80% of annual collection funding dedicated to the core collection. This means that continuations--journal subscriptions, reference materials, and local electronic resources such as CD-ROM indexes-- are consuming 80% of the materials budget, leaving only 20% for single item purchases of circulating materials.

The objective for new acquisitions is not necessarily to increase the number of titles, but rather to assure the currency of information offerings. A steady state collection with a constant

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infusion of new materials can be maintained by adding 5% new titles and withdrawing 5% outdated materials every year. For the current number of titles in the collections, 5% would be 3,745 titles added a year. At an average of $30 a title, it would take approximately $112,000 a year to maintain a current steady state collection.

Recommendation: A projected budget should be prepared for the new HCC administration requesting materials funding utilizing the analyses in this report and the Hisle report as rationale to increase support to improve the currency of materials in the HCC collections..

With the provision by the state through FirstSearch of electronic indexing tools and a basic journal collection full-text, the environment for collection development and management will become more oriented toward coordinated cooperative collection development. In this environment it is increasingly important to know local needs more precisely. Two user surveys are discussed in the next section of the report.

Satisfaction of Users

In 1996, a Program Review was conducted by Consultant W. Lee Hisle for the Florida Community Colleges Libraries/Learning Resources Centers.[6] A component of the review was the surveying of faculty, staff, and students of the community colleges with regard to the services and collections of the L/ LRC's. The results of the surveys for Hillsborough Community College L/LRC's show that the faculty and students rate Staff Knowledge, Helpfulness, and Availability highly. In general, the ratings relating to staff were predominantly in the Excellent category. With respect to resources and services, the greatest number of ratings were in the Good category. Hours Open, Access to the Internet/WWW and Availability, all received more Good than Excellent ratings with some Fair and Poor also.

The Book/AV/Software collections and Periodicals collections all received more Good than Excellent ratings. The Book/AV and Periodicals collections also received the most Fair and Poor responses. Electronic resources received higher ratings than the Periodicals and Book/AV.

In the service categories, both Library Instruction and Hours Open received more Good than Excellent ratings with Hours Open also receiving a considerable number of Fair and Poor ratings. The Availability of computer equipment and Access to the Internet/WWW received similar ratings with more Good than Excellent and a considerable number of Fair and Poor ratings. In the student comments more online resources, more books, and more Internet access were mentioned. With respect to access to the collections, the number of hours open can be critical in providing access to materials. Both students and faculty ratings indicated the need for the facilities to be open more hours. If HCC were to provide more services electronically with off-site access to students, the need to extend the hours of the physical facilities might be somewhat ameliorated. In the current communications environment, 24 hour access has become the norm for many businesses and services. Most of the SUS institutions and many community colleges now provide 24 hour access to electronic resources through web pages and dial-up access.

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When this consultant talked with HCC Library/Learning Resources staff and administration, it was evident that problems with telecommunications within Hillsborough CC were the main obstacle to the L/LRC's providing better electronic access for students and faculty.

Recommendation: The HCC libraries should develop a plan for increased electronic access both within the physical facilities and off-site through dial-up access or the WWW.

The results of the evaluation survey conducted by HCC staff in the spring of 1997 (Appendix E) are similar to those of the Program Review . The HCC study has separate results for each campus while the Program Review results were given as a composite set. The HCC study has a larger number of participants, but in general, as in the Program Review, services are rated higher than resources. For all four campuses, the predominant rating by the faculty for Book Collections, Periodicals, AV, Electronic Resources, and Internet/WWW are Satisfied, higher than the number who are Very Satisfied. There are smaller numbers expressing Dissatisfaction, but there are ratings in that category. Dissatisfaction seems to be about equal for Book Collections and Periodicals. Fewer numbers of responses are recorded by most campuses in the Electronic Resources and Internet/WWW categories with a higher number of "Don't Knows" or no answers.

While the predominant rating by students was "Satisfied" for nearly all categories, students registered the most Dissatisfied ratings in Hours open, the resources categories and Access to the Internet/WWW.

The user surveys indicate that there is overall satisfaction with the services of the HCC L/LRC's. This is good news for the staff who work diligently to provide those services. Now that these positive ratings are established, there needs to be further probing to elicit more specific suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of the collections and resources which were rated somewhat lower than the services.

Recommendations:: The results of both user satisfaction studies should be analyzed by the staff from an individual campus and a college-wide perspective.

The next evaluation of services survey should endeavor to gather more specific information on exactly what students and faculty are dissatisfied with, e.g., if resources, is it currency of resources? suitability to curricula, level of materials, specific periodicals titles lacking? etc.

Summary and Conclusions

Two recent user surveys have shown that there is a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by the HCC L/LRC's. Satisfaction is lower with regard to all formats of resources which are available for users although utilization studies show a high degree of use.

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When examined by year of publication, the utilization studies show that older materials in the collections are heavily used. Data by year of publication and subject demonstrate that the HCC collections have a high proportion of materials with publication dates of more than 20 years old.

If the heavy utilization of the resources, the lower than average title to student ratio, the proportion of the collection in older imprints, and the low percentage of funding available for non-subscription items are all considered together, it can readily be seen from all measures that HCC collections need more support to meet user needs. The results of these studies point to a need to increase the number and quality of current materials available for HCC students and faculty. These studies form a baseline and should be used to design further studies which will probe more specifically into user needs.

The optimization of local funding and satisfying local needs in the future will, of necessity, take place within a cooperative environment. While each HCC campus is part of a separate governance structure, a cooperative attitude does exist among the campus L/LRC staff. But there does not appear to be feeling of being part of an HCC community college "system." Even if such a mentality is not fostered or encouraged by HCC administration, the prevailing professional philosophy in the information professions is one of communication and cooperation. There appears to be a need for the L/LRC staff members to be more aware of the professional world beyond the local campus. Greater cooperation and communication should be encouraged with other community college L/LRC's throughout the region and the state via the Tampa Bay Library Consortium and CCLA. The campuses which have curricula and programs in the health sciences should strive for more communication and coordination with other community colleges in the region which have health sciences programs and with the university and hospital communities through the Tampa Bay Medical Library Network (TBMLN).

With the changes which technological advances and the availability or electronic resources are bringing to information provision, greater awareness and cooperation with other libraries in the state are becoming a necessity. There is one final, encompassing recommendation:

Recommendation: A primary goal should be to orient the collection and services of the HCC LRC's to strengthen local resources within the context of regional, statewide, and global resources.

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4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Hisle.

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